

CSCB Matching Grants

CSCB Matching Grant Program Application Guidelines 2017

Application deadline is Friday, July 8, 2016

ONLY EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR 2017

Be sure to obtain Board approval of application, any District match obligated,
and document this decision in the official Board Meeting minutes.

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www.colorado.gov/ag/cscb and click on Matching Grants

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CSCB / NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION MATCHING GRANTS

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Important 2017 Operational Dates to Consider When Applying:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reimbursement Requests Due: | no later than December 20 th |
| Quarterly Reports Due: | April 20 th , July 20 th , October 20 th |
| Projects to be completed by: | November 20 th |
| Final Reimbursement Due: | December 20 th |
| Final Report Due: | December 20 th |

CSCB Matching Grants

MISSION STATEMENT and FUNDING INTENTION

The CSCB Matching Grants Program, administered solely by the Colorado State Conservation Board, assists Colorado Conservation Districts in implementing and encouraging sound natural resource planning, management and development particularly in minerals, energy, geology, and water resources.

The funds are intended primarily to implement enduring on-the-ground conservation practices and educational activities for sustaining and protecting Colorado's natural resources through public/private partnership. **Only educational activities will be considered for 2017.**

BACKGROUND

Colorado's natural resources are among the State's most important assets. These resources have shaped our past, guide our present activities, and most certainly will influence the future. We have a commitment to both our ancestors and future generations for the wise use of these resources.

Conservation is an ongoing task that requires the constant attention and cooperation of both private landowners and public agencies. Conservation is not a job that we can ever call complete. The long range and annual plans of work of the seventy-six Conservation Districts identify the concerns of this State as perceived by the people most affected by resource management decisions – the local landowners and land users.

According to The Colorado Soil Conservation Act, the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) administratively housed within the Colorado Department of Agriculture, is the state agency responsible for awarding and administering these funds.

FUNDS SOURCE AND DISTRIBUTION

All of the authorized funds will be distributed to the Conservation Districts in the form of grants. The Colorado Legislature has authorized funds for projects addressing the conservation of Colorado's natural resources. The Colorado Department of Agriculture has traditionally made additional funds available through the Severance Tax Revenue Fund and/or the State General Fund. Although these Matching Grant program funds have been offered in the past, there is no guarantee of these funds' continued availability in the future.

The level of grant application funding per district that may be available for 2017 is the range of \$1,000 to \$7,000. Requests for \$4,999 or less will not require a contract.

Funds will be paid on a reimbursement basis by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) agreement, established in advance.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

These grant funds are available only to a conservation district or a group of conservation districts who may apply for grant awards.

Districts must be in “Good Standing” with the State [meeting all statutory requirements according to Colorado Revised Statute Title 35, Article 70 (Conservation Districts) and Title 32, Article 1 (Special Districts)] at the time of application.

Should two or more Districts wish to combine their applications, note which District is primary record keeper in the Application Narrative.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Projects must impact/benefit private lands within the State of Colorado. In general, natural resource conservation educational activities eligible for grant awards should provide a cost-share; add to the knowledge of existing practices or management procedures, or support/address innovation and technology. ***The intent and goal of these funds for 2017 is to deliver effective educational activities.*** All applications will be assessed on their own merit. **Equipment cannot be purchased with the grant funds;** although leasing or hiring equipment is permitted, it must be professionally contracted. Applications for grants to hire general administrative staff will not be considered. Projects should address natural resource concerns identified by the Locally Led Conservation Group hosted by the local conservation district; by the Watershed Association, or be identified in the district’s Annual or Long Range Plan.

Fund and match expenditure for any award made from this application must take place between January 1st, 2017 (or upon the contract effective date) and November 20th, 2017 (project completion date).

Examples of Eligible Educational Activities:

- Small Acreage Workshops
- Soil Health Workshops
- Education regarding riparian protection or forest health conservation practices
- Workshops on implementing water quality or quantity projects
- Workshops on controlling invasive pests
- Workshops on weed control practices for List A and/or List B species (may include List C)
- Hiring a watershed association coordinator for overseeing educational activities
- Education seminars on implementing energy conservation or energy efficiency projects

Ineligible uses of Matching Grant award funds

- Purchasing equipment
- Landowner labor (although this can be used as a “hard-cash” match)
- Administrative costs only
- DCT staff time - to present workshops, etc. (already a cost-share program), nor can DCT staff time be claimed as match

MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENTS

The grant application must provide for and identify matching funds to satisfy a 100%, dollar-for-dollar match of the CSCB funds requested with a fifty-percent (50%) minimum hard cash match. For example, if a District grant application requests \$7,000 from the CSCB, the District must document a match of \$7,000 with at least \$3,500 of that being hard cash. The funds requested and match is documented on the Matching Grant Application Budget template (on the website). The match must be raised and expended within the contract timeline and according to the expected completion date. Match dollars will ordinarily be expended in tandem with award expenditure where practicable and must be at a level equal with expenditures no later than September 30th of the grant year. The match can be a combination of district, private, local government, or federal dollars, but no other state funds (the only exception is the CSCB Direct Assistance).

*The 50% minimum required hard cash match may include landowner labor time (based on verifiable rates for local professional service-providers) for conservation education. **Use of landowner equipment is not considered a cash or in-kind match.*** Please see the Matching Grant Application Budget template (on the website) which includes term definitions for a more detailed explanation of match categories.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

Completed applications must be e-mailed to the CSCB:

EMAIL: cda_cscbgrants@state.co.us

DEADLINE: FRIDAY JULY 8TH, 2016

Pre-application assistance - Before submitting the formal application, the District may request assistance from the CSCB Staff. The CSCB Grant Administrator at the main CSCB office or the CSCB Field Specialist in your area can provide a preliminary general review of application completeness/format/clarity and answer any questions regarding the application process.

YOUR APPLICATION SHOULD INCLUDE:

- Grant Application *Narrative* – includes the Statement of Work (form available from the CSCB website; all applications)
Noxious weed-related applications *must include* List A and/or list B weeds, but can also include List C weeds.
- Grant Application *Budget* (form available from the CSCB website; all applications)
- Signed partner agreements/letters for specific matching contributions

Optional ~ Up to three pictures (.jpg or .gif format) or visual models depicting the type of education activities planned, etc. **Please clearly identify what is depicted on or near the picture itself.**

Do not include general letters of support.

PROJECT BUDGET

The project budget must be submitted on the Matching Grant Application Budget Excel template that is available on our Matching Grants website. **Making use of the “Notes” section of the budget to provide further details for budget items is strongly encouraged.** This helps Grant Evaluators understand your intended use of the funding or better detail the sources of funding. The Evaluators are very interested in and are charged with the task of

ensuring the taxpayer's dollars are being used appropriately so provide the Evaluators sufficient, pertinent details so they clearly see where the money is going.

Construct Your Budget Carefully:

It is critical that the Matching Grant program does not accrue significant unspent dollars. Even though the funds are paid by reimbursement, they are "obligated" within the individual contracts and cannot be used elsewhere unless officially de-obligated. If funds are neither spent by the contracting district, nor de-obligated, they will remain unspent at the end of the contract and potentially jeopardize future program funding and deprive other districts of access to the funds they might need. Funds that are not spent by the end of the contract cannot be retained by the district to be applied to future years.

Typically, returning zero to less than 5% of awarded funds at the end of the contract/grant year is considered acceptable. If more than 5% is consistently returned over several years, the District is prohibited from applying for a Matching Grant for 3 years.

Administrative Costs

Project administration costs may be a maximum of 10% of the project and deducted at a maximum of 10% of the Matching Grant award. For example, a \$7,000 project with a \$3,500 CSCB award may have a maximum of \$700 in administration costs. Of those costs, a maximum of \$350 may be deducted from the \$7,000 CSCB award. This limit is auto-calculated on the Budget form.

For match purposes, time of a paid *District staff would be cash match* using that person's actual salary costs. If a *board member* were doing the award administration, or a partner, then it *would be an in-kind match at the same salary rate of the district manager.*

Project Labor Costs

This is labor for your *specific project* activity implementation. For example, design and production of materials, organizing and carrying out workshops, technical assistance from District staff, NRCS staff, contractors, etc. **Note: if you are using a Farm Bill District Conservation Technician (DCT) to provide technical services for your project, their time cannot be claimed from the award nor used as match since their salary is already part of a matching funds program.** DCTs are not to be used for organizing workshops and events, only developing and presenting technical aspects of the workshop or event.

Indirect Costs

These are costs such as building, communications and utilities, shared equipment and insurances. As match, they would be in-kind match if paid by partners or cash match if paid exclusively by the district. Only DISTRICT incurred indirect costs for the project may be claimed from the award - at no more than 5% of the award or \$1,000 (whichever is lowest). Overall, indirect costs cannot exceed 5% of the project costs or \$5,000 (whichever is lowest). These limits are auto-calculated on the Budget form. If indirect costs are incurred by different entities, then you must explain which different indirect costs are allocated to each.

Explanatory notes to clarify budget figures can be provided on the second tab (Budget Notes) of the Budget template. For example, "travel rates based on state travel rates of _____" or "district labor for project activity includes x, y, z" are explanatory notes. Explanation of how the budget was approached and descriptions of why choices were made should be included on the third tab of the Budget template (Budget Questions).

Match Allocation: Helpful Considerations

- Remember that although state partners may be contributing to your project and mentioned in the narrative, state funds/resources (except the CSCB Direct Assistance) cannot be used as match and should not appear in your budget. State partner contributions may be described in the narrative, but it should be made clear in

the Budget Notes tab that their contributions do not form any part of the actual budget. Federal partners are to be documented as in-kind match.

- Matching funds should be allocated on a reasonable basis where they are not wholly allocable to a project. For example, a whole day workshop that is only half-pertinent to this project should only have half its costs attributed as match to this project.
- You cannot use the same resource as match in two places. For example, a person whose labor time is being used to match for another purpose/organization cannot also be used at the same time as a match for this program. (This includes staff hired under the CSCB District Conservation Technician (DCT) program. These staff can work on technical aspects of Matching Grants programs but their time cannot be claimed from the award or used as match).
- Be aware that a match item is not inadvertently counted twice.

APPLICATION REVIEW AND EVALUATION

All applications should be submitted electronically to cda_cscbgrants@state.co.us. The CSC Board will review & evaluate each application.

The CSC Board ultimately decides to approve or deny project funding and award offers will be made to districts in the fall of each year with contracts expected to begin January 1st the following year. The CSC Board's decision is final without any further review. *The CSC Board may approve funding to ensure a balance of project type and/or geographically distributed conservation benefits.*

Criteria used for scoring applications are available for you to view on the CSCB Matching Grants web site.

CSCB staff conducts an initial screening to verify all CSCB Matching Grant applications meet the "District in Good Standing" requirements before releasing applications for evaluation.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO CONSIDER

Project Coordinator: District must designate a District Project Coordinator as the main contact between the CSCB and the District

Quarterly Reports: Due April 20th, July 20th, October 20th (until Final Report submitted)

Final Report: Due no later than December 20th

Publicity Effort: at least 1, preferably documenting the educational activity, the success of the educational activity, the funding partners, plans for future activities, etc. (announcing the activity is not considered publicity for this purpose)

Photograph: at least 1 photograph of the educational activity to be included with the Final Report

Liability Insurance: District must have general liability insurance in force and a copy provided to the CSCB